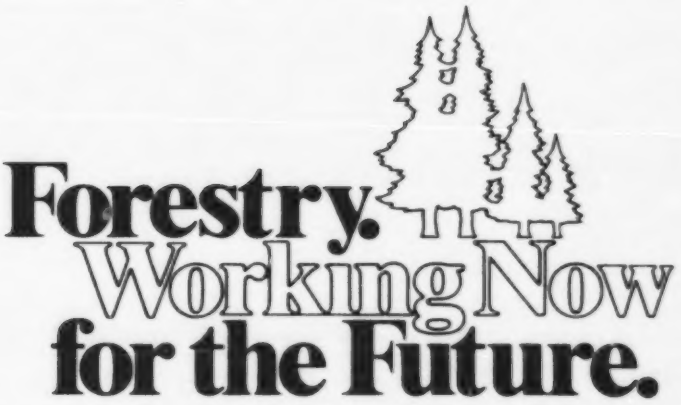
A FOREST POLICY FOR PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

WHITE PAPER



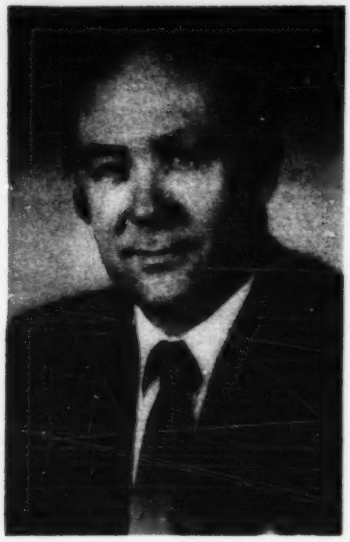
Department of
Energy and
Forestry

A FOREST POLICY FOR PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

WHITE PAPER

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & FORESTRY
HON. ALLISON ELLIS
MINISTER

AUGUST 20, 1987



OFFICE OF THE MINISTER

August 20, 1987

Dear Collaborator:

Earlier this year, I wrote to you requesting your input into the design of a Twenty-Year Forest Development Plan and the formulation of a new Forest Policy for Prince Edward Island. At that time, I expressed to you Government's intention to work with resource owners, industry and other users of the forest to develop a stronger commitment to renew the forest so that it can realize its full potential.

Much has happened over the past six months:

1. A series of meetings was held with environment, industry and woodlot owner groups across the Province to discuss the Twenty-Year Plan;

2. The results of these meetings formed the basis for the document, which you will find attached: **"A Forest Policy for Prince Edward Island;"**

3. On July 30 in Saint John, New Brunswick, Forestry Ministers from across Canada joined with representatives of labor, industry, acedemic and environment groups to finalize a new Forest Sector Strategy for Canada;

4. The Department of Energy and Forestry has continued its efforts to develop markets for pulpwood and wholetree chips. Results in both areas are most encouraging.

Forestry is at a crossroads. We have the benefit of several years experience with our silviculture program, we have witnessed the tremendous gains from planting and stand improvement, and we have over 2,000 woodlot owners involved in the Private Land Forest Management Program. There are encouraging developments in markets for a wide range of forest products. Most importantly, people are more aware of the value of a healthy forest in maintaining environmental quality, aesthetic appeal, recreational potential and a climate for economic growth.

As the time approaches to negotiate a new Canada/Prince Edward Forest Resource Development Agreement, it is essential that I receive input from all interested parties. This white paper, **"A Forest Policy for Prince Edward Island"**, has been reviewed and approved in principle by my cabinet colleagues. As you read through it, you will note that it is a general statement of Government's intentions. It will serve as a guide for the design of appropriate programs, but it is not carved in stone.

I ask for your help once again in making this a better policy for the development of our forest resource and invite your comments and suggestions. It is my intention to finalize a Forest Policy for approval by my cabinet colleagues before the end of October, and in this regard I request that you forward your comments and/or suggestions directly to me prior to October 20. Should you require explanation or clarification on the white paper, please do not hesitate to call. My staff are at your disposal and are available to discuss the document.

Yours sincerely,

Allison Ellis
Minister

Attachment

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INTRODUCTION:

This paper sets out a proposed policy by which the Government of Prince Edward Island will be guided in its programmes and activities affecting forests and the forest sector. The proposed policy will provide a basis for development of legislation that concerns forestry, and for negotiation with other levels of government, land owners, industry, educational institutions, non-government organizations and the general public on matters related to forestry.

Occupying almost half the Island, the forests of Prince Edward Island are the Province's most abundant natural resource. Yet their potential to enhance the Island's economy remains largely unrealized. For example, the forest sector contributes only one quarter of one percent to the Provincial Domestic Product, compared to 6.6 percent in the neighbouring Province of New Brunswick. There is no doubt that Island forests can produce valuable timber. More than 4,500 vessels were built here from local wood in the nineteenth century. However, the shipping of large quantities of quality lumber from the Island, land clearing, and extensive and persistent harvest of fuelwood resulted in serious deterioration of the resource. More recently, these factors have been compounded by repeated high grading and by abandonment of agricultural land. White spruce has invaded these lands, but unfortunately seldom survives beyond sixty years in such settings. The

sudden collapse of this most important species is evident throughout the Island. Thus, events of the past have resulted in a large number of existing forests now approaching maturity in a badly neglected condition.

Despite these setbacks, the fundamentals needed to sustain a productive forest base, and a thriving resource-based industry, remain. The Island enjoys a favourable climate and some of the best soils in Canada. Forest lands are distributed across the Province and are accessible through an established network of roads. The workforce required to develop the resource and associated industry exists and will benefit from suitable training and reasonable incentive.

An enhanced forest sector offers significant benefits to the Province, both in the long term, and in the near to medium term. Recent improvements in management and utilization, particularly of privately owned forests, have helped the Province to produce half its lumber needs; substantial increases, especially in more valuable graded lumber, are foreseeable. Twelve percent of the Island's energy is now produced from forest biomass; almost 100 million litres of imported oil, currently valued at $27 million, can be substituted by forest biomass by the year 2005, in an imaginative programme that would upgrade Island forests at the same time. A recent survey of job prospects in the Province [1] revealed that an increase of 28.5 percent could be achieved in employment in the forest sector by 1992, the highest growth potential rate among all 105 occupations available to Islanders.

[1] Job futures: An Occupational Outlook for Prince Edward Island. Employment and Immigration Canada, 1987.

The economic and employment benefits of an enhanced forestry programme are only part of the picture. The Provincial conservation strategy [1] states that:

> "Forestry would be an important part of the conservation strategy even if the merchantable value of the forests was slight".

The reason becomes apparent as one travels the Island: everywhere the Island landscapes illustrate how forests protect soil and water resources, provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife, create windbreaks for homes, livestock, crops and roads, and contribute to the Island's renowned landscapes. Remove forests from the mind's eye, and the results are devastating. In reality, the neglect or abuse of forests could be just as devastating, and would be felt quickly by some of our most important sectors, including tourism, agriculture and fisheries.

The forests of Prince Edward Island are intimate forests, perhaps more so than anywhere else in Canada. They are an integral part of a rural mosaic within which people live, work, play and travel. They are part of the Island's life support system, whether we speak of our much-admired quality of life, or of the necessities of life, such as water and shelter. Essential as their roles are now, forests can contribute much more to the well being of the people of P.E.I., and can do so in a manner that is truly sustainable. The Government recognizes

[1] A Conservation Strategy for Prince Edward Island. Prepared for Executive Council by the Coordinating Committee for Conservation. 94 p. + appx. March 1987.

that Island forests present a special opportunity to rebuild a resource-based industry. The Government is committed to this opportunity and will pursue its task with a policy that is sufficiently comprehensive to address the complexity of forestry issues, and that is flexible enough to respond to the evolving aspirations and priorities of the people of this Province.

2. CURRENT SITUATION:

The primary responsibility for forest management lies with land ownership. In the case of publicly-owned lands, this responsibility is assumed by the Provincial Government, and specifically by the Department of Energy and Forestry. Since ninety percent of forest lands are privately owned, the Government exercises additional responsibility through a comprehensive forest management assistance program available to the 16,000 private woodlot owners of the Province. The Department is directly responsible for managing 25,000 hectares of Crown Lands, but has lacked a clear policy for this task. In addition, the Department develops and tests production and processing technology, promotes education and awareness among resource owners and users, provides training, marketing and technical advisory services to the forest industry, manages nurseries and implements fire control operations.

While the forestry division was created in 1951, impetus for current programs was gained from a fifteen-year Comprehensive Development Plan, begun in 1969. In 1983, the Canada/P.E.I. Forest Resource Development Agreement was signed to provide additional funding of $20 million over five-years. Objectives of the Agreement focused on development of a wood fuel industry, increase in sawn and processed lumber production, increase in employment, and development of associated industries. The wood fuel industry component of this Agreement was complemented by the Canada/P.E.I. Alternate Energy Development Agreement signed in 1984. The uncertain security of the Island's energy supplies, for both space heating and electrical generation, has given Islanders a new look to their historical dependence on wood for fuel: the woodchip industry, "has the potential to become a significant component and even competitor to imported fuels." [1]

As a requirement of the Forest Resource Development Agreement, the Province undertook preparation of a Twenty-Year Forest Development Plan.[2] The Plan, released in 1986, was based partly on a Forest and Biomass Inventory completed in 1982, and provides a prescription for substantially increased employment opportunities, self-sufficiency in lumber and other important forest products, substitution of imported fuels, and silvicultural enhancement of a large proportion of the Island's privately-owned forests. Significant economic benefits would be realized as increased sales, increased

[1] In: Energy Security for Prince Edward Island, Government of Prince Edward Island.

[2] Prince Edward Island Twenty-year Forest Development Plan. Prepared for the Department of Energy and Forestry by Dendron Resource Survey Ltd., Ottawa, 56p.+ appx. April 1986.

public revenues, import reduction and increased value added to the Provincial Domestic Product.

In 1987, the Plan was subjected to extensive public consultation, and formed the basis of a Forestry component in the Provincial Conservation Strategy. As a result, the Plan has been widely endorsed as a sound approach to the economic development of the Island's forest resources. It has been repeatedly emphasized, however, that the Plan does not address the full range of issues facing the forest sector in Prince Edward Island, and that steps must be taken to address the important roles, other than production of merchantable timber and biomass, played by Island forests. Additional concerns include the need for public education in forest management, a better informed public playing an active role in decisions affecting forest resources, incorporation of multiple use concepts in forest management, an expanded workforce, careful consideration of financial incentives for and commitments of private woodlot owners, market development, and a clearer policy for Crown Land forests.

The Government believes that, with appropriate recognition of these factors, the Plan provides a basis for a forestry program that can increase employment, raise economic returns from the forests, and enhance the ability of forests to provide many other benefits to the people of Prince Edward Island.

3. MANDATE:

The Government administers matters relating to forestry under The Forestry Act (1951), an Amendment to The Forestry Act (1956) and Regulations pertaining to The Forestry Act (1951). The Act makes provisions for the licensing of woodcutters, the enforcement of statutes, rules and regulations, protection of forests from fire, and reforestation.

The Department of Energy and Forestry is responsible for fire control under provisions of Part VII of the Fire Prevention Act Chap. 16, 1983 and, in 1987, implemented a new Provincial Forest Fire Policy and Procedures. The Department is also responsible for implementing the Canada/Prince Edward Island Forest Resource Development Agreement signed in 1983; the Agreement expires in March, 1988.

4. OBJECTIVES:

The objective of the Provincial Forest Policy is to ensure that the forests of Prince Edward Island contribute sustainably to the economic, social and environmental well being of Islanders through:

i) Increased employment opportunities in a productive and marketable forest industry.

ii) Increased opportunities for woodlot owners to sell their resource at a fair price.

iii) Increased substitution of imported softwood and hardwood lumber, fuels for space heating and electrical generation, Christmas trees, maple syrup and other high value added products.

iv) Increased export of pulpwood and wood products manufactured from Island resources.

v) Protection and enhancement of associated natural resources, in particular wildlife, fisheries, soil, water and landscapes, and

vi) Increased understanding, by owners and users, of sound principles of forest management.

5. PRINCIPLES:

In pursuing these objectives and implementing its policies and programs, the Government will observe the following principles:

i) The Government of Prince Edward Island recognizes its responsibility for development of forest resources in a manner that is consistent with ownership, market opportunities, social needs and environmental requirements.

ii) Government policy and programs should benefit all the people of Prince Edward Island.

iii) Sound management and utilization of forest resources must be based on adequate information on growth and yield, and must recognize the long term commitment required to sustain natural forest systems.

iv) The government must manage and utilize Crown Lands to maximize the sustainable flow of benefits to the public, particularly through the application of multiple use concepts.

v) The full exercise of rights and obligations of private land owners must be preserved unless these are clearly demonstrated to be contrary to the public interest.

vi) The proportions of softwood and hardwood species existing on forest land are a desirable element of the Island's natural diversity and should be maintained on a Provincial basis.

vii) Pesticides are legitimate means for effective forest management in specific areas, provided that their use is controlled by strong regulation.

viii) Government policies and programs must foster fair wages for labour-intensive work, an adequate return on silvicultural investment, and wood product values that are comparable with prices elsewhere in the Maritime region.

ix) The public must have access to relevant information on the allocation, management and utilization of forest resources.

x) The public must have opportunities to participate in decision-making processes affecting forest policies and programs.

xi) The policy

- will provide a basis for negotiation with other levels of government,
- will provide a basis for improvements in the legislative base,
- will support the Provincial Conservation Strategy and the National Forest Sector Strategy,[1] and,
- must have a significant, positive effect on employment, the economy and the quality of life in Prince Edward Island.

6. STRATEGY AND ACTIONS

The Government will adopt the following strategy and actions in the pursuit of its objectives for this policy.

6.1 Focus on a Productive Forest Resource:

While recognizing the essential role market analysis and development must play in the establishment of a viable resource-based industry, the Government's first priority will be to restore and improve the productive forest base.

[1] A National Forest Sector Strategy. Canadian Forestry Association. July, 1987.

This task will commence with the inventory and evaluation of forest lands and their resources, calculation of growth rates and depletions, and designation of land use allocations and priorities. The implications of major development proposals will be assessed by qualified independent analysis.

The quality and growth rate of merchantable production will be secured and increased through a comprehensive silviculture programme to include:

- site preparation
- tree improvement
- seedling production
- planting
- stand improvement
- thinning
- management of competing vegetation
- management of forest pests
- reclamation of dead and dying trees
- forest fire management
- improved road access and boundary establishment
- forest inventory on a ten year cycle

6.2 High Value-Added Products

Government programs and silviculture initiatives will aim to derive products of high value from the resource base, provided that all necessary decisions are made with due regard to ecological capability, landowner's priorities and other important considerations.

Landowners will be encouraged to consider options for development of their properties, and to give priority to those areas that yield products with high intrinsic values or that will have a significant multiplier effect through subsequent product processing. Full consideration will be given to non-consumptive uses, as well as to the wishes of the land owner. As part of its industrial development strategy the Government will give careful consideration to initiatives that increase the value added to Island forest products, and will seek to link this strategy with appropriate resource planning and management.

6.3 Markets

Existing markets for the Island's forest products will be secured and enhanced, and new markets will be identified and developed for current and emerging forest products.

The Government recognizes that market development is an integral part of comprehensive forest planning, and will work vigorously with other government, industrial and non-government agencies to ensure that the market potential of the Island's resources are realized. Market development will proceed on two fronts.

The first priority is to achieve Island self-sufficiency in currently-imported commodities that can be realistically and economically substituted with Island produce. Special opportunities have been identified in graded softwood and hardwood lumber, biomass fuel, Christmas trees and maple syrup. Each of these commodities has

high intrinsic value; lumber can lead to further gains in value added through secondary manufacturing. Biomass fuels will be investigated for their potential in cogeneration of electrical energy. The Government emphasizes the special contribution forest-based biomass fuels can make to alleviate the high energy costs suffered by Islanders.

The second priority is the development of export markets for commodities surplus to domestic needs, and for commodities that can be produced competitively on the Island. In the long term, the Island can expect to produce graded lumber and pulpwood for export. However, in pursuing these markets, the Government will ensure that the production of high end value commodities is maintained wherever possible, and that non-commercial forest interests of Islanders are not compromised.

6.4 Private Lands

Participation of private woodlot owners in the management and utilization of forest resources will be increased.

Since ninety percent of the Island's forest resources lie in private hands, it is imperative that the Government adopt policies and programs that can be implemented effectively on these lands. The Government will conduct its comprehensive management programmme through a Private Land Forest Management Assistance Programme. Fundamental to this program will be woodlot management plans, which set out objectives and management plans for individual woodlots. The programme may also provide assistance for planting, silviculture, access improvements, and

boundary establishment. In addition, the Government will provide extension services to encourage private woodlot owners to enter into management agreements and to assist them in the implementation of plans and marketing of wood fibre.

The Government will encourage private woodlot owners to consider establishment of owner organizations. The Government will give special consideration to such organizations established under the Natural Products Marketing Act or other appropriate legislation.

6.5 Crown Lands

The contribution of Crown Land forests to the forest sector will be enhanced.

The 25,000 hectares of forested Crown Land represent an outstanding opportunity for the Government to provide demonstrated leadership in appropriate land use in sound techniques of forest management. The Government will develop management plans that combine the land's potential for sustainable forest-based economic and employment returns with its capability to support multiple uses, including provision of wildlife habitat, recreation, landscape enhancement, and the full range of environmental benefits, including soil and water conservation. Special consideration will be given to management of Crown Land forests adjacent to or visible from designated Rustic Roads, or that constitute forested natural areas.

Crown Lands will be used to achieve specified forestry-related goals of the Government, such as the conduct of tests and trials, establishment of seed production areas and orchards, demonstration and research.

The Government will acquire new lands to secure them for specified needs, such as fibre production, representative natural areas, research sites, seed production areas and other requirements for the implementation of this policy. Priority will be given to the establishment of a network of Provincial Forests, areas distributed across the Province where Government currently owns and manages large, contiguous blocks of forest land.

6.6 Environment and Multiple Use

Government programs affecting the allocation, management and utilization of forest resources will encourage the realization of multiple benefits that can be derived from forest lands, and will enhance essential roles forests play in conservation of a wide range of natural resources.

The extensive forests of the Island exert a significant positive effect on natural diversity and on protection of watersheds and soils. Because of the linkages among ecological processes and the biota in natural ecosystems, sound forest management can provide many benefits. It is both desirable and practicable to conserve soil, to

protect watersheds, to improve fisheries and wildlife habitat, and to create recreation and tourism opportunities with plantings that ultimately can attain a commercial value of their own. Special consideration will be given to those practices with merit for multiple use and environmental purposes. These practices include planting hedgerows and streamside buffer strips, provision of appropriate planting stock, and the establishment of standards for road construction and stream crossings. Candidate natural areas, significant wildlife habitat, and sites of outstanding natural beauty will be protected to the full extent of the Government's ability.

Crown Lands provide the Government with opportunities to demonstrate and practice diversified management. Recreation on these Lands will be enhanced through retention of public access. In providing these measures, the Government will protect the public interest against losses from fire and vandalism.

Benefits accrue to the tourist industry through a variety of subtle, yet extensive qualities of forests. The Government recognizes the contribution landscapes make to the attractiveness of the Island, and is aware that visiting tourists are appreciative of the forest component of these landscapes. These factors will be given due consideration in decisions affecting the hedgerow programme, access for recreation, and forestry practices in high visibility areas, particularly along Rustic Roads .

6.7 Workforce

An adequately trained workforce will be made available to the forest sector.

The Island is fortunate to have a working population within reach of all its forest resources. However, difficulties are experienced in obtaining workers for a variety of silvicultural, harvesting and processing operations. In cooperation with on-Island and off-Island educational institutions, and the Silviculture Contractors Association, the Government will develop a programme to improve the image and attractiveness of forestry work, to improve wages and working conditions, to train individuals for work and careers in forestry, and to upgrade skills in the existing workforce.

6.8 Research and Development

The Government will ensure that research and development conducted on forest resources of the Island address the priority needs of the forest sector.

The Government will concentrate its research and development (R & D) capability on the development of operational requirements and on the transfer of technology developed through the activities of its own and other agencies. Special emphasis will be placed on management techniques specific to the Island's forest types, genetic improvement of the major reforestation species, and the development of harvesting and processing procedures.

The Government will act closely with the Canadian Forestry Service (CFS), through the Forest Research Advisory Committee, in the formulation of R & D priorities for Prince Edward Island, and will cooperate with the CFS in the conduct of R & D.

6.9 Education, Public Information and Community Involvement

The Government will strive to increase the public's awareness of Island forestry issues and of the benefits of forests and the forest sector to Islanders. The Government will also encourage the involvement of the public in decisions affecting forestry.

Community involvement is viewed as a cornerstone of democratic decision-making. However, for full benefit to be derived from such involvement in the forest sector, it is vital that the public be well informed of the resource, and of the consequences of actions taken on it. The Government will provide a broad, multi-media public awareness programme that will provide basic information, increase interest in forestry matters, and advise interested parties on specific topics related to the management, utilization and marketing of forest resources.

The Government will make available periodic management plans for the Island's resources, and will maintain an "open-door" for the provision of specifically requested information, except where this may conflict with proprietary needs of private individuals.

The Government views young people as the most receptive audience for effective dissemination of information. The Government will, therefore, encourage schools to assist in the important task of improving young people's understanding of the Island's forest resources and their place in Island development.

In the pursuit of its policy objectives, the Government will cooperate closely with community and voluntary organizations, such as the Canadian Institute of Forestry, forest industry associations, woodlot owner organizations, P.E.I. Wildlife Federation, Island Nature Trust, Natural History Society, Boy Scouts of Canada and Girl Guides of Canada.

6.10 Legislation

The Government will prepare new legislation to strengthen the mandate and support for its activities in forestry.

New legislation is required to provide a comprehensive framework for the acquisition, objectives and management of Crown Lands; to establish and implement programs that support private woodlot forestry; to enable the Government to develop and enforce regulations as necessary; to establish access rights; to protect special features; and to provide for inventory, growth and yield data, scaling, seed and seedling production, forest protection, industry and land owner education, and other matters essential for effective implementation of this policy.

7. CONCLUSIONS

History tells us that the forest can be an immensely valuable asset to the people of Prince Edward Island. Unfortunately, history has also left Islanders with a legacy of degraded and neglected forests. The inability of spruce to survive its old-field origins for more than sixty years now creates enormous obstacles for the orderly timing and direction of harvest of the Island's forest resources. The distribution of ninety percent of forest lands among 16,000 woodlot owners creates an additional dimension to the task.

Despite the serious constraints posed by past neglect, and the challenge of designing a forestry programme that addresses private woodlot ownership, the Government recognizes within the Island forests a resource that can enhance significantly the social, economic and environmental well-being of Islanders, and has set out a policy by which this goal can be achieved. The focus of this policy is on the development of the forest resource, but within a framework that links resource planning with market opportunities. Forests cannot be managed without reference to their utilization. And while it is important that the highest values should be pursued for the market place, markets are also needed for the low value materials abundant in the Island forests at present, to help offset the costs of their replacement by more productive forests.

The Government will face this dilemma with an imaginative program that will raise the quality of the forest resource, addressing in the process, some of the Island's other pressing issues, namely opportunities for employment, self sufficiency in energy and other essential commodities, and conservation of wildlife, fisheries, soil, water and landscapes. The Island has attained national leadership in the application of alternate energy technologies, and major opportunities remain in this area to utilize the Island's surplus low grade biomass. In the medium and long term, production of quality sawlogs, development of furniture, wood trim and other manufacturing industries, and export of pulpwood and other products will each add momentum to the development of a strong forest sector on the Island.

The Government urges Islanders to seize these opportunities. It has put forward a policy that will help the private woodlot owner to respond to the challenge. The policy will give forested Crown Lands an important role in augmenting wood supply and in leading the Island into a more diversified approach to forest management and utilization. The policy seeks to develop the workforce needed for these tasks, by making forestry an attractive source of employment and by encouraging appropriate training. It will guide available research and development resources, and will foster education, public information and community involvement to achieve its objectives.

Two steps have yet to be taken before the Government can implement its policy. First, it must strengthen the legislative mandate for its activities in forestry. This will be done through a new forestry act, planned for passage in 1988. Second, the Government must obtain the cooperation of all interested parties, in particular the Federal Government, industry and landowners, to support its endeavours to improve the forest resource. The Federal Government will be urged to renew cost sharing arrangements that have been so effective in recent years. With these requirements met, the Government of Prince Edward Island can proceed with confidence to restore what is potentially one of the Island's most important natural assets, its forest resource.